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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3794
INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 1158
RUEHMK/AMEMBASSY MANAMA PRIORITY 2473
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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KU](#)
SUBJECT: KSS ARRESTS SIX FOR PLOTTING TERROR ATTACK

REF: REF: TD 314/053780-09

Classified By: CDA Tom Williams for reasons 1.4 b and d

Kuwait Security Service Rounds Up Plotters

11. (S/NF) Acting on shared intelligence as well as on its own suspicions, Kuwait State Security (KSS) forces have arrested six Kuwaiti men -- in whose possession were home-made explosives and guns -- for planning attacks on Camp Arifjan -- a vital logistics hub that is home to thousands of U.S. military personnel -- as well as KSS headquarters, and possibly, Shuwaiba commercial seaport. (Additional details of the plot and the ongoing investigation are provided in ref TD.) KSS was aware of these men and their links to extremist groups and individuals, some of which date back to the 2002 Failaka Island attack in which a US marine was killed. Information derived from AQ plotter Yousef Al-Lababidi (in Bahraini detention) led KSS to increase surveillance on two of the members of the plot, with additional leads being developed by KSS and leading to subsequent arrests. Since the arrest and subsequent confession in recent days of the group's supposed ringleader, Suliman Al-Kandari, KSS has been gathering evidence on the group and that investigation is ongoing. Al-Kandari reportedly named his co-conspirators, but did not reveal until very recently the targeting of Camp Arifjan. According to KSS head MG Suliman Al-Muhaylan in an explanation to GRPO officers, KSS was obliged to inform the Public Prosecutor's office of its detentions in order to keep the suspects in custody and it was this notification that subsequently leaked to the press -- compromising KSS's ongoing investigation. Al-Muhaylan noted that concerns about leaks prior to the required legal handing of the case to the Prosecutor's office were so great that KSS did not even inform the Acting Amir of its activities.

Is This the Big One?

12. (S/NF) KSS confirms that there was communication in the past between members of the group with a Kuwaiti AQ facilitator now in a Beirut jail, Mohammed Al-Dossari (AKA "Al-Hajj" or "Abu Talha") and with known AQ figures detained in Bahrain, but it is not clear that there was AQ command and control of the operation. More likely, this initiative may have been inspired by AQ, but was in effect homegrown. Press reports indicate claims from the individuals that they were "with Al-Qaeda ideologically but not of Al-Qaeda."

Arrests Highlight Threat Extremists Pose to Kuwait

13. (S/NF) Replacing H1N1 in the headlines, the successful foiling of the plot should help reinforce our consistent message (most recently delivered by visiting S/CT Ambassador Benjamin in late July) that terrorists represent a threat not only to the U.S. and neighboring Arab and Muslim countries, but also to Kuwait itself. The fact that Kuwaiti nationals and Kuwaiti infrastructure were targeted by the extremists has been widely reflected in the local press coverage and initial responses from MPs and opinion leaders have praised the vigorous action by KSS and denounced the violent intentions of the extremists.

Comment

14. (S/NF) While the longer-term consequences of the disruption of this cell remain to be seen, it can reasonably be hoped that greater public recognition of the threat will result and that such a development -- combined with praise for the swift actions of the KSS/Interior Ministry -- will help foster even more activity and coordination/cooperation on CT issues -- an area in which over the past six to nine months we have already seen substantially greater Kuwaiti activity and focus. End comment.

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